

## **Magnetics: Industry Overview** **Is Your Website a Strategic Marketing Tool?**

by *Walt Benecki*

**The site should be easy to read, simple to navigate and provide value to the visitor.**

The magnetics industry, like most other manufacturing industries, presents an extremely wide range of quality when it comes to its member's websites. Some view a website simply as an electronic billboard, and just as is the case with the old highway version, many of these sites become stale and are of limited value as they begin showing their age. Others view their website as an integral part of their overall marketing strategy and allocate sufficient investment dollars to assure that their website presents a positive image of their company and provides customers easy access to catalogs, application information and design assistance.

Those who have the most to benefit from effective websites are design engineers, purchasing agents and new suppliers to the marketplace. The emergence of the Chinese as a major worldwide supplier of magnetic materials has certainly been facilitated by the Internet. Buyers are able to easily identify new potential suppliers and efficiently contact them via email. This trend will continue to aid new Chinese competitors who are entering the marketplace as suppliers of magnetic materials or finished components such as motors, consumer electronics, appliances and telecommunications equipment.

The keys to an effective website are rather basic. The site should be easy to read, simple to navigate and provide value to the visitor. Handy tools such as a site map, search capability and industry links will often encourage return visitors. Catalogs, product information and application and design assistance are valued features in most popular websites. Advantages of providing catalog and design materials on one's website include the relative ease and low cost to provide expanded, updated or corrected information. The ability to purchase samples or small quantities of standard products is also a very popular feature.

The most violated rule in industry websites is the "stale bread" rule. If you are not frequently updating your website, it will eventually take on the flavor of stale bread and return visitors will become a rarity. Another common

error is to include elaborate graphics that slow down a site and only provide gratification to the geek who originally created the graphics. Everyone else is turned off as they tap their fingers waiting for the graphics to load. Also, to the extent that log-ins can be avoided, your site will certainly be viewed as more visitor friendly.

If you wish to benchmark your website against some of the better websites in our industry, take a close look at these sites:

**Allegheny Technologies Inc. - *Electrical Steels***

**([www.alleghenysteels.com](http://www.alleghenysteels.com)):** Crisp and comprehensive site that's easy to read and navigate. Updated frequently. **Allegro Microsystems Inc. - *Hall-Effect Sensors***

**([www.allegromicro.com](http://www.allegromicro.com)):** Extensive product selection guides, informative design center, buy demo boards online.

**Bunting Magnetics Co. - *Magnetic Assemblies & Systems*** ([www.bunting-magnetics.com](http://www.bunting-magnetics.com)): Clean site with intranet access for insiders. Good navigation and an online store.

**Carpenter Technology Corp. - *Magnetic Alloys*** ([www.carttech.com](http://www.carttech.com)): Solid basic website, requires login to access technical literature, reader friendly layout.

**Group Arnold - *Magnetic Materials and Assemblies*** ([www.grouparnold.com](http://www.grouparnold.com)): Excellent technology center, reader friendly with comprehensive web directory and industry links.

**Honeywell Inc. - *High Frequency Cores*** ([www.metglas.com](http://www.metglas.com)): Recently upgraded with improved navigation, expanded technical literature and enhanced search capability. **Magnetics, Inc. - *Soft Magnetic Cores***

**([www.mag-inc.com](http://www.mag-inc.com)):** Significant upgrade earlier this year, excellent navigation with design software available online. **Pulse Engineering, Inc. - *Passive Magnetic Components***

**([www.pulseeng.com](http://www.pulseeng.com)):** Crisp, easy navigation with online stock check for registered customers, good industry links. **Visteon Corp. - *Automotive Components and Systems***

**([www.visteon.com](http://www.visteon.com)):** Simple navigation, comprehensive site, excellent employment section, random visitor satisfaction survey. **Webmagnetics, Inc. - *Magnetics Industry Portal***

**([www.webmagnetics.com](http://www.webmagnetics.com)):** Online news service for subscribers, industry directory, recruiting and placement services.

In the future, more and more companies in the magnetics industry will be upgrading and expanding their websites to attract new customers and provide added value for existing customers. A first class website will potentially be more valued than traditional space advertising and more cost-effective than most sales calls. Design engineers and purchasing agents will gradually discard hard-copy catalogs and brochures, expecting ready access

to their electronic equivalents. Companies will continue to conduct more and more business on the Internet, especially sample kits and catalog items that can be easily purchased with a credit card. The trend is quite clear that websites are rapidly becoming strategic marketing tools in our industry.....is yours?

*Walt Benecki is a former President of Group Arnold and a past president of The Magnetic Materials Producers Association. Walt has established a consulting practice serving the worldwide magnetics industry. Contact him at [waltbenecki@aol.com](mailto:waltbenecki@aol.com)*